UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO : Mr. Wick

FROM : M. A. Jones

DATE: 4-20-67

SUBJECT: "THE SCAVENGERS AND CRITICS OF THE WARREN REPORT" - PUBLISHED BY DELACORTE PRESS BY RICHARD WARREN LEWIS, based on an investigation by... ...LAWRENCE SCHILLER
BOOK REVIEW

SYNOPSIS: (for the sake of clarity in this memo Lewis and Schiller will be referred to as "the authors.")

Review of above-titled book requested by Mr. DeLoach. FBI is mentioned throughout book. Most references merely factual. But the last chapter, titled "THE REASONS FOR DOUBT," pp. 169-179, contains criticisms of FBI and Secret Service. Typical of these criticisms is a sentence contained on p. 171 relative to possible conspiracy. The authors state: "And conceivably the FBI and Secret Service probes did not dig deeply enough into this ticklish area."

Bob Considine has an "Introduction" in book and states Lane must be accorded the No. 1 spot among the coterie that Governor Connally has dismissed as scavengers. To date, he appears indestructible. Considine feels that author Lewis and investigator Schiller have made a notable contribution toward a clearer understanding of the assassination. Schiller states in his foreword, he was in Dallas 3 1/2 hours after the assassination took place as a staff representative of the "Saturday Evening Post" and he saw the chaos and horror of that time. Authors feel majority of accusations against Commission unfounded and in some cases intentionally distorted. Authors accuse Lane of using gimmicks of professional huckster-- distortion, innuendo, conjecture, allusion and sheer fantasy. Background data on Lane's civil rights participation and arrest included. Testimony of SA Shaneyfelt set forth. (pp. 69-70) Mrs. Sylvia Meagher regarded as the "Housewives' Supersleuth" and the unchallenged authority on the 26 volumes of the Warren Report. Separate chapters devoted to Penn Jones, Jr., and Edward J. Epstein, their theories of conspiracy, etc. Director's name mentioned p. 94 when authors state Commission counsel Liebeler loaned Epstein two FBI reports, one of which bore FBI seal "and J. Edgar Hoover's name on the cover...." Authors discuss observations of Mrs. Carolyn Walther which suggested a possible conspiracy and Epstein

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RE: "THE SCAVENGERS AND CRITICS
OF THE WARREN REPORT"

SYNOPSIS CONTINUED:

stated insufficient attention was paid to her observations. Retired journalist Harold Weisberg who accused Commission of pursuing preconceived case of Oswald is discussed in chapter V. At bottom of p. 125, Weisberg alleges the FBI and the Secret Service framed the whole thing, not the murder, but everything that has happened since. Additional testimony of SA Shaneyfelt contained on pp. 129-131. Chapter VII, p. 163, deals with George C. Thomson, California, who "peddles the most bizarre assassination theory of them all. Five people were killed in Dealey Plaza...The suspect is Lyndon B. Johnson." Last chapter "THE REASONS FOR DOUBT," pp. 169-179, contain authors' allegations against FBI and Secret Service. "Sloppiness in both the FBI and Secret Service photographic re-enactments of the assassination left the door ajar for the critics." (p. 173) This statement is typical of the statements made by the authors against the FBI and the Secret Service in these last few pages of the book.

BUFILES:

No record in Bufiles on author Richard Warren Lewis. Several references on Lawrence Schiller, who is a contract photographer for the "Saturday Evening Post." Bureau Agent interviewed him on 3-5-64 relative to Schiller advising Jack Ruby's attorney Tom Howard that the "Post" was interested in a story which would be of mutual benefit to the "Post" and to Howard's client, Ruby. Schiller was very cooperative. Later he sent a transcript of Ruby's conversation with his attorneys and his family. He offered Director a copy of the tape. Mr. Hoover thanked him for transcript and declined tape. Recently, Schiller furnished identity of Mark Lane's confidential informant who allegedly overheard a conversation of a meeting between Jack Ruby, Dallas Police Officer J. D. Tippit and Bernard Weissman. Lane's informant was identified as Paul Bridewell and Dallas is currently conducting investigation to locate Bridewell so that he may be interviewed.

RECOMMENDATION:

That no action be taken as no new facts have been presented in this book. The last chapter represents another very general attack on the Warren Commission, the United States Secret Service and the FBI. But there is not one thing specific. The book and the allegations are nothing more than a rehash of the same old story. It is obviously a commercial venture by another author, Richard Warren Lewis, to capitalize on criticism of the Warren Report.

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UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

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Trotter
Tele. Room
Holmes
Gandy

TO : Mr. Wick

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FROM : M. A. Jones

SUBJECT: "THE SCAVENGERS AND CRITICS OF THE WARREN REPORT"
BY RICHARD WARREN LEWIS, based on an investigation by...
BOOK REVIEW
...LAWRENCE SCHILLER

DETAILS

The above-titled book bearing the subtitle "The Endless Paradox" was written by Richard Warren Lewis based upon an investigation by Lawrence Schiller with an introduction by Bob Considine. It has been reviewed at the request of Mr. DeLoach. The FBI is mentioned throughout the book more than 50 times. Most of the references are merely factual but the authors are somewhat critical in the last chapter of the book as set forth in this memorandum.

In his introductory remarks Considine states that author Richard Warren Lewis and investigator Lawrence Schiller have made a notable contribution toward a clearer understanding of the assassination of John Fitzgerald Kennedy...he states this book "shapes up as the Rosetta Stone of this Report." Considine states that Mark Lane must be accorded the No. 1 spot among the coterie that Governor Connally has dismissed as scavengers. To date, he appears indestructible. He states that regardless of the fact that Lane has appeared before the Commission and has had a host of open confrontations at his lectures, his book, "Rush to Judgment" is still with us. He further states that "One hopes that the work of Lewis and Schiller gets airborne through the smog spread by the poisoned calculations of the professional cultists." (pp 7 - 10)

In his "Foreword" Lawrence Schiller states he was in Dallas three and one-half hours after the assassination took place, as a staff representative of the "Saturday Evening Post" and he saw the chaos and the horror of that time and the sights and sounds of Dallas in November, 1963, are impossible to forget. In his introduction, he points out that the investigation which he and Richard Lewis conducted to get the facts for this book was not conducted from an arm chair; that they returned to Dallas again and again; that they went to

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Washington, D. C., to check out facts at the National Archives; they taped interviews with Commission members and members of their staff; they traveled 18,000 miles to seek out witnesses and they met with the critics themselves. Schiller stated that in the end, there was no doubt in their minds that the majority of accusations and allegations against the Commission were unfounded and had been based on material that was not only misinterpreted but, in some cases, intentionally distorted. (pp. 11 - 15)

In speaking of Mark Lane on page 20, he states Lane was succeeding with the gimmicks of the professional huckster--distortion, innuendo, conjecture, allusion and even sheer fantasy. "A high point of the routine occurred when he dramatically unveiled well-coached witnesses he thought should have been quizzed by the Commission. He showed no restraint in hinting that President Johnson was protecting the real assassins " On page 21, he states that Lane embraced the civil rights movement in 1961; that he was arrested and convicted of breaching the peace in Jackson, Mississippi, where he and a Negro leader attempted to use segregated facilities at the municipal airport. The authors take Lane to task for his evasive testimony on two separate occasions before the Warren Commission and they set forth a variety of data concerning Lane to show his methods and his rather irrational behavior.

In chapter II, the testimony of SA Lyndal L. Shaneyfelt is set forth and the authors refer to him as a photographic expert with the FBI who made exaustive tests to determine the authenticity of certain exhibits concerning the Oswald rifle photograph. (pp. 69-70)

At the beginning of chapter II, titled "The Housewives' Underground," the authors quote Mark Lane as saying that for three years there has been an unorganized group of housewives, editors and students who have the 26 volumes of the Warren Report in their homes and they have played a very important role in developing the body of dissenting information and that he, Mark Lane, is part of that network. A great deal of space is devoted to one of the leaders of this housewives' underground movement, Mrs. Sylvia Meagher, a widow who was regarded as the "Housewives' Supersleuth"--the unchallenged authority (among the skeptics) on the 26 volumes. They interviewed her and questioned her in detail.

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Beginning on page 79, the authors devote a chapter to Penn Jones, Jr., who is convinced there were at least two riflemen firing simultaneously and he stated he knew of 18 people who were in one way or another associated with the assassination and who are now dead. Jones spread his incredible story among television and radio audiences in some of the biggest cities in the country. He published a book called "Forgive My Grief" which served as a Bible for his faithful flock. Certain photographs are contained in this chapter and stories of various deaths are contained therein.

Chapter IV is titled "Edward J. Epstein." He is a 31-year-old Harvard University graduate student; he gave up a fellowship to produce his thesis for a master's degree in government. His subject was the workings of the Warren Commission. And, through his mentor, Professor Andrew Hacker, Commission members and staff met with Epstein and he eventually gained access to privileged files and reports. A swift metamorphosis occurred once his thesis was completed. Without informing his benefactors he transformed his thesis into the book titled "Inquest" which was a broadside against the findings and methods of the Commission.

"The chemicals that catalyzed Epstein's innocent efforts into a best seller were two FBI reports, unmarked as to classification, given to him by assistant Commission counsel Wesley J. Liebeler under representation that they were to be used only in connection with his thesis. One of the blue-bound volumes, imprinted with the FBI seal and J. Edgar Hoover's name on the cover was a summary report dated December 9, 1963, which capsuled what FBI investigations into the assassination had uncovered up until that date: ...." The second FBI document referred to was a supplemental report dated January 16, 1964. Both of these documents directly collided with the final official autopsy conclusions contained in the Warren Report." (pp. 93 - 95)

On pages 105 through 109, the authors discuss the observations of Mrs. Carolyn Walther which suggested a possible conspiracy and Epstein stated that insufficient attention was paid to her observations.

Chapter V deals with Harold Weisberg, a retired journalist who accused the Commission of pursuing a preconceived case against Oswald.

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At the bottom of page 125, he states that his book is the one that does not draw upon eye-witnesses; that he is the severest critic of the Commission because he restricts himself to the Commission's information; he states the FBI and the Secret Service framed the whole thing, not the murder part, everything that has happened since. Additional testimony of the FBI photographic expert Shaneyfelt is contained on pages 129 through 131 when he was questioned by Commission counsel Arlen Specter and Commissioner Gerald R. Ford.

Chapter VI is devoted to the "Superbuffs" and the authors state the numbing wreckage wrought by the fourth Presidential assassination within a century has washed up a curious assortment of flotsam and jetsam. It is hard for people who have turned into the category of amateur detectives to believe that one deranged individual could possibly have murdered someone of the stature of the late President.

Chapter VII, beginning on page 163, deals with George C. Thomson of Glendale, California, a consulting civil engineer who peddles the most bizarre assassination theory of them all. "Five people were killed in Dealey Plaza. There were at least twenty-two bullets fired. The suspect is Lyndon B. Johnson. An automatic weapon equipped with a silencer was used. Kennedy was not killed. He was impersonated in the Presidential limousine by Officer J. D. Tippit."

Chapter VIII is titled "The Reasons For Doubt." This is the last chapter of the book and contains the authors' own doubts as to certain phases of the whole investigation they conducted. The authors state on page 170 that the gravest errors committed by this resourceful computer-age investigation were directly attributable to the same human frailties which have existed for centuries. They say "A conspiracy is difficult to prove with the scientific certainty of, say, the tracing of a bullet to a weapon... Instead of employing every conceivable means to establish the possible existence of such an explosive likelihood, as the Commission staff did in the area of ballistics and trajectory, the conspiracy investigations of the FBI and the Secret Service alone were believed implicitly... The Commission did check out the possibility of the FBI and/or the Secret Service being involved in a possible plot. This was done by using the Internal Revenue Service and other Government agencies for investigative reports and conceivably the FBI and Secret Service probes did not dig deep enough into this ticklish area." (p. 171)

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The authors mention Garrison's accusation of a conspiracy between Clay Shaw and David Ferrie and others on pages 171 and 172.

On page 173 the authors state "Sloppiness in both the FBI and Secret Service photographic re-enactments of the assassination left the door ajar for the critics." They did not deal with the fact that in the re-enactment at the scene of the crime a Cadillac limousine was substituted for a Lincoln Continental and one would think that the FBI would rephotograph Billy Lovelady to establish irrefutably his resemblance to Oswald and there is no indication that this was done. The authors go on to criticize the FBI and the Secret Service for what they consider discrepancies in the re-enactment on Dealey Plaza and Neely Street which appear in the Warren Report. (pages 174 and 175)

The authors relate that much of the abuse leveled at the Commission protests the manner in which its hearings were conducted; that the Commission has been denounced for the hasty manner in which it arrived at its final conclusions. (p. 178)

RECOMMENDATION:

That no action be taken as no new facts have been presented in this book. The last chapter represents another very general attack on the Warren Commission, the United States Secret Service and the FBI. But there is not one thing specific. The book and the allegations are nothing more than a rehash of the same old story. It is obviously a commercial venture by another author, Richard Warren Lewis, to capitalize on criticism of the Warren Report.